

Normal 0 false false false EN-US X-NONE X-NONE
MicrosoftInternetExplorer4

Friday, March 19, 2010
Sara Howard, 314-962-1523

Nation's largest organization for people over 50 says bill "cracks down on insurance company abuses and protects and strengthens guaranteed benefits in Medicare"

(WASHINGTON, DC) - Congressman Russ Carnahan (MO-03) today applauded the largest organization for people 50 and over for their support of health insurance legislation before Congress, saying the endorsement underscores important provisions in the bill that will improve health care for older Americans and their families.

"I am personally gratified that so much progress has been made in closing the donut hole," said Sharon Wells, a representative of AARP in Missouri and a member of Congressman Carnahan's Senior Advisory Committee. **"Having a husband with Parkinson's Disease who needs to take three brand-name drugs because there currently are no generic ones available is a tremendous burden on us financially. When he falls into the donut hole, which is usually in May, those three drugs at least quadruple."**

Today, the AARP - with 40 million members nationwide and over 820,000 in Missouri - issued a

statement endorsing the final health care legislation being considered by the U.S. House of Representatives. The endorsement highlighted key components in the health bill that close the Medicare prescription drug "donut hole," strengthen Medicare for future generations by cracking down on fraud and waste, and prevent insurance companies from dropping or pricing people out of coverage when they get sick.

"Passing this health care bill is going to have a tremendous positive impact on millions of Americans just like Sharon and her husband," Carnahan said. "It's time to have an up-or-down vote so that families like Sharon's don't have to worry about health care costs threatening their financial security. It's time to give the American people access to the same kind of coverage Members of Congress have. It's time to stop the insurance companies from denying coverage to people because they have a preexisting condition or cutting them off if they get sick. It's time to pass this bill."

The new health care bill, which is available online at www.rules.house.gov, will stop insurance companies from denying coverage to people with preexisting conditions or dropping coverage for people who get sick; make health coverage more affordable for middle-class families; and allow individuals and small businesses access to the same kind of health insurance options available to Members of Congress. In addition, it contains critical improvements on the bill passed by the Senate last month, including:

- Improving Medicare coverage for millions of seniors by closing the prescription drug donut hole;
- Increased assistance to help middle-class and low-income Americans afford to buy private insurance; and
- The elimination of special "sweetheart" deals for specific states.

A new analysis released yesterday by the non-partisan Congressional Budget Office indicates the bill will reduce the federal deficit by \$138 billion in the next decade and more than \$1.2 trillion over 20 years, and provide health coverage for an additional 35 million Americans.

The full statement released by AARP today follows, and is available at <http://www.aarp.org/aarp/presscenter/>

###